

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for consideration given the present application. Claims 1-9 are currently pending. Claim 1 has been amended and claim 9 has been added through this reply. Claim 1 is independent. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejected claims in light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, and earnestly seek timely allowance of all pending claims.

The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Japanese Patent Publication No. 2003-345114 to Tsuda in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 08-339115 to Iguchi further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,963,713 to Isomura et al (Isomura). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a length in the extending direction of each conveying portion is not less than 1/16 and not more than 3/8 of an inner circumferential length of the container main body.” The applied references fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claim 1.

The present invention discloses that “When the length A36 in the first extending direction of the first projection piece 36 and the length A39 in the second extending direction of the second projection piece 39 are shorter than 1/16 of the inner circumferential length of the first container segment 33 and the inner circumferential length of the second container segment 34, the developer conveying capacity is decreased. Moreover, when the length A36 in the first extending direction of the first projection piece 36 and the length A39 in the second extending

direction of the second projection piece 39 are longer than $3/8$ of the inner circumferential length of the first container segment 33 and the inner circumferential length of the second container segment 34, the strength of the container main body 31 is decreased, which is not preferable. Further, when the conveying capacities of the first projection piece 36 and the second projection piece 39 are too large, coagulation of the developer may be caused in the neighborhood of the discharge hole, which is not preferable.” (See page 28, line 17 through page 29, line 11 of the specification.)

Tsuda and Isomura fail to disclose or suggest such a configuration and the resulting advantages are not considered. Iguchi fails to cure the deficiencies of Tsuda and Isomura. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claim 1.

For at least the reasons stated above, independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the applied references. The dependent claims are at least allowable by virtue of their dependence on corresponding allowable independent claim 1.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims based on the applied references is respectfully requested.

New Claim 9 is Patentable

New claim 9 is added. New claim 9 is patentable at least due to its dependence on allowable independent claim 1 and for the additional features it recites.

Conclusion

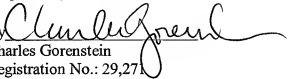
In view of the above remarks, it is believed that claims are allowable.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Obert H. Chu, Reg. No. 52,744, at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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